

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): Method for coating the surface of a metal material having a crystallographic structure, according to which the material is first coated with a layer of a metal or a metal alloy having a melting point equal to T_f and a thickness less than or equal to $2.5\mu\text{m}$, characterised in that:

- the first coating is subjected to thermal processing using a rapid heating means in order to bring the surface of the first coating to a temperature of between $0.8T_f$ and T_f ;

- a second coating is deposited from a metal or a metal alloy having a thickness less than or equal to $1\mu\text{m}$.

2. (original): Method according to claim 1, characterised in that the first and second coatings have melting points less than or equal to 700°C .

3. (currently amended): Method according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, characterised in that the first and second coatings are constituted by the same material.

4. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, characterised in that a transparent mineral film is then deposited on the second coating.

5. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, characterised in that the metal material to be coated is a carbon steel.

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6. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~claim 1, characterised in that the metal material to be coated is a stainless steel.

7. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~claim 1, characterised in that the metal material to be coated is aluminium or one of the alloys thereof.

8. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~claim 1, characterised in that the first coating is produced by means of electrodeposition.

9. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~claim 1, characterised in that the first coating is produced by a physical vapour deposition method.

10. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~claim 1, characterised in that the means for rapid heating is an infra-red heating device.

11. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~claim 1, characterised in that the means for rapid heating is an induction heating device.

12. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~claim 1, characterised in that the means for rapid heating is a device for discharge with plasma with a non-reactive gas.

13. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~claim 1, characterised in that the means for rapid heating is a device for ion bombardment with a non-reactive gas.

14. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 13~~claim 1, characterised in that the second coating is produced by means of electrodeposition.

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15. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 13~~claim 1, characterised in that the second coating is produced by means of a physical vapour deposition method.

16. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 4 to 15~~claim 4, characterised in that the transparent mineral film is deposited by means of a reactive plasma assisted chemical vapour deposition method.

17. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 16~~claim 1, characterised in that the first and/or second coating(s) is/are constituted by tin.

18. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 17~~claim 1, characterised in that the first and/or second coating(s) is/are constituted by aluminium.

19. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 18~~claim 1, characterised in that the mineral film is constituted by a metal oxide or a mixture of metal oxides.

20. (original): Method according to claim 19, characterised in that the metal oxide(s) is/are selected from the oxides of austenitic stainless steel, chromium, titanium, silicon, zinc, tin.

21. (currently amended): Method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 20~~claim 1, characterised in that the metal material is in the form of a moving strip, and in that the various method steps are carried out continuously by means of installations which are arranged successively over the path of the moving strip.

22. (original): Device for coating a metal material in the form of a strip, characterised in that it comprises means for moving the strip and, arranged successively over the path of the strip:

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- first means for coating the strip with a layer of a metal or a metal alloy having a melting point equal to T_f ;

- means for rapidly heating the strip which can bring the surface of the layer to a temperature of between $0.8T_f$ and T_f ; and

- second means for coating the strip with a layer of metal or metal alloy.

23. (original): Device according to claim 22, characterised in that it comprises, downstream of the second means for coating the strip with a layer of a metal or a metal alloy, means for coating the strip with a transparent mineral film.

24. (original): Metal material, characterised in that it comprises, on at least one of the surfaces thereof, a metal coating having a three-dimensional visual effect, the coating being formed directly on the surface of the material.

25. (currently amended): Metal material according to claim 24, characterised in that it is produced using ~~the~~ a method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 21, which~~

the material is first coated with a layer of a metal or a metal alloy having a melting point equal to T_f and a thickness less than or equal to $2.5\mu\text{m}$,

- the first coating is subjected to thermal processing using a rapid heating means in order to bring the surface of the first coating to a temperature of between $0.8T_f$ and T_f ; and

- a second coating is deposited from a metal or a metal alloy having a thickness less than or equal to $1\mu\text{m}$.